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Remonstrance against ratification of agreement with Seminole Indians. Letter from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting, a remonstrance against the ratification of an agreement between the Commissioners of the United States to negotiate with the Five Civilized Tribes and the Commissioners of the Seminole Nation, concluded on the 16th day of December, 1897.

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REMONSTRANCE AGAINST RATIFICATION OF AGREEMENT WITH SEMINOLE INDIANS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,

TRANSMITTING

A REMONSTRANCE AGAINST THE RATIFICATION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE UNITED STATES TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES AND THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE SEMINOLE NATION, CONCLUDED ON THE 16TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 1897.

JANUARY 31, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on the Five Civilized Tribes and ordered to be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, January 29, 1898.

SIR: Referring to my letter of the 12th instant, transmitting to the Congress for its consideration and ratification an agreement between the commissioners of the United States to negotiate with the Five Civilized Tribes and the commissioners on the part of the Seminole Nation, concluded on the 16th day of December, 1897, I have the honor to transmit herewith to the Congress, for its information and consideration, a copy of a paper which purports to be a remonstrance adopted by a mass convention of members of the Seminole tribe of Indians against the ratification of the said agreement and transmitted to this Department by Hulbutta, as second chief of the Seminole Nation, in a letter dated the 24th instant, a copy of which is also inclosed herewith.

Very respectfully,

C. N. BLISS, *Secretary.*

The PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

MEKUSUKEY, IND. T., *January 22, 1898.*

Hon. OKKUSKEY MILLER,
Chairman of Convention.

SIR: We, your committee, to whom was assigned the duty of drafting resolutions to forward to the honorable Secretary of the Interior, wish

to state that after due consideration we have drafted the following resolutions, which we trust will meet your approval.

SAM HAYNE,
Chairman Committee.

Adopted by unanimous vote of convention.

OKKOSEKE MELLO, *Chairman,*
DANIEL BAKER, *Clerk,*
Per TITUS MARK.

SEMINOLE NATIONAL SCHOOLS, MEKUSUKEY ACADEMY,
Mekusukey, Ind. T., January 24, 1898.

D'R SIR: "I will write you a brief letter."

The petition has been made and concluded by the undersign, regarding to the "New treaty made by and between the United States Government and the Seminole Indians, and I hereby certify that the petition has no contrariness against the nation, but simply for justice. The petition was read in my presence, and the contents thoroughly understood, finding me of no objection to the petition, and it is to be submitted before you for your careful consideration and make a reply of same.

Very respectfully,

HULBUTTA,
Sec. Ch'f Seminole Nation.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.

MEKUSUKEY, SEMINOLE NATION,
INDIAN TERRITORY, 1898.

The SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR: We, the undersigned citizens of the Seminole Nation, in council assembled, respectfully beg leave to submit to your consideration that whereas an agreement has been entered into by the Dawes Commission on the part of the United States and a committee on the part of the Seminoles composed of John F. Brown, Wm. Cully, Okchuse Harjo, K. N. Kinkehee, Thos. Factor, and Thos. West, and said agreement having been interpreted to and ratified by the national council of the Seminoles, and it now being submitted to the Congress of the United States for its final ratification.

Whereas during the discussion relative to the treaty in the Seminole council an act was passed permitting citizens not members to come before council and express their views, said citizens requested the council to submit the provisions of the treaty to a popular vote.

The council having failed to reply to this request and altogether ignoring the matter, proceeded to ratify the treaty. By the laws of the Seminole Nation a two-thirds vote of *all the members of the council*, numbering 42 members, is required to legalize any action pertaining to outside their own exclusive. This treaty was passed on by a vote of 23 favoring, 10 opposing, and 9 absentees. By their not securing a two-thirds vote of the 42 members, the ratification was not done legally by the Seminole law. The treaty having been assumed by the council to be ratified, the wishes of the populace, as stated, being ignored, the

treaty was hurriedly carried to Washington by the delegates for Congressional action. The citizens then called on the second chief, Halbutta, then acting as principal chief, asking his advice whether they should proceed to leave the treaty to the popular vote of the people, notwithstanding the departure of the delegates. He replied instructing them to present their remonstrance and appeal to the honorable Secretary of the Interior. In accordance with these instructions, we beg leave to present this a summary of our claims and wishes.

Therefore we, as Seminole citizens, feeling that whatever benefits are to be derived from the ratification of this treaty we should be the sole beneficiaries, but as the matter is now presented the opposite will be the result and we be the sufferers, as it is in some parts entirely detrimental to our interests, prosperity, and enlightenment. Believing, as we do, that it is the intent of the United States Government to benefit us and not to injure us, we earnestly and firmly object to the Congressional ratification of this treaty without the consent of the people.

Of all the Five Civilized Tribes, as you no doubt are aware of, the Seminoles are the least advanced in civilization. It has been but a short time since the advent of churches, schools, and other elements of civilization among us, and still a shorter time since entering into an era of prosperity. We believe that any sudden or stringent change would tend to demoralize our industries and retard our progress.

In accordance with the advice and instructions of the then acting principal chief, we beg leave to present this a summary of our actions to bring our views before your Department.

One hundred male citizens of the Seminole Nation met in a called convention, and organizing elected a chairman and clerk. After the object of the meeting was explained, a resolution was passed appointing a committee of twelve to draft such resolutions and appeal as might be acceptable to the people. This committee composed of Sam Hayne, Caesar Simon, Fas Harjoche, John Taylor, Nokos Ille Thlocco, Ahale Marthla, Joseph Kinkehee, Waletto, Isaac Jones, Yahahacoco, Aholokoce, and Mose Larney. These twelve appointed a subcommittee of three of their number, who were to prepare the communication to your Department, which was accepted by the whole committee and then adopted by the representatives of the people. We respectfully beg leave to solicit your patient consideration of our requests and give them your kind cooperation [cooperation]. First, we desire to know if your Department deems it expedient and in justice to the Seminoles that this treaty be submitted to the popular vote of the Seminoles to be amended to suit their situation and views on the subject; or, should you not deem it expedient, we ask will you permit us to send a delegate to appear before you and explain our views? The Dawes Commission, after negotiations with the other tribes, had given them ample time in which to consider the features of their treaties. But you will note that the Seminoles were given no time in which to reflect, consider, and understand the provisions of this treaty, which to them was of so vital importance. Therefore we believe the personal interests of some Seminoles entered into the delay and hurried action in this matter.

The national funds of the Seminoles are absorbed by only a few of their citizens who have grown rich at the public expense, and we firmly believe that these few persons are oppressing the poorer ones. As to the assertions pertaining to the Seminole government, we cite the following: In the year 1889 an agreement was entered into by the United States and the Seminoles by which the latter relinquished to the United States their title to lands known as Oklahoma for the consideration of

\$1,912,942.02. The Seminoles placed on interest with the United States \$1,500,000. They withdrew \$221,647.80, expending this amount for various national purposes. There was the sum of \$191,294.20 which never entered the treasuries of the United States or the Seminoles. The reply given to us about the disposition of this money by our authorities was that during the transfer of these lands to the United States there was a lawyer who negotiated the agreement and took that amount for his pay. The name of the lawyer was never mentioned and no receipt of the alleged deal was ever shown. We call your attention to this. We ask that you take note of the town-site laws of Wewoka and see to whom only these laws are beneficial and whom they oppress. We call your attention to the fact that the annuities due the Seminoles by law July 1 are never paid until in October.

We beg leave to state further that we have no law regulating the bond of our treasurer or chief, and according to the Seminole law no action or bill can be placed before the council without the consent of the chief. Our laws do not admit of an auditor, and our people are entirely ignorant of the condition of our finances. Therefore, in conclusion, we desire to say that while the legislation has not been in line with our wishes, we must perforce of circumstances accept the inevitable. We ask that any disposition of moneys belonging to the Seminoles and the management of their schools be made with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. We earnestly ask you to reconsider the new treaty as a whole in regard to us and relieve us from its obligations. We most respectfully ask you that we be allowed to hold our lands in common, as provided for in the treaty of 1866, and that we be given time to consider and change from our present manner of life. We believe, with the assistance of the honorable Secretary of the Interior, that if our request be granted and the management of our schools be left with him, that at no distant day our rising generation will become fully as enlightened as his pale-face brethren and be ready to take upon themselves the responsibilities of United States citizenship.

Therefore we, your humble petitioners, wish, in conclusion, to state that our faith in the wisdom and integrity of the officials of the United States remains unshaken, and that as wards of a great Government of free and enlightened men we can not believe that any measure would be ratified that would be detrimental to our interests. With all confidence in your ability and good intents we ask, in the name of God, that you deal with us as you would be done by.

Respectfully yours,

SAM HAYNE, *Chairman.*

CEASAR SIMON (his x mark).

FAS HARJOE (his x mark).

JOHN TAYLOR.

NOKOS ULLE THLACCO (his x mark).

AHALE MARTHLA (his x mark).

JOSEPH KIN KEE HEE.

WALETO (his x mark).

ISAAC JONES.

YOH HACOCE.

OHOLAKO IN.

MOSE LARNEY (his x mark).

Attest:

NATH. F. WILLIAMS.

LOUIS FIFE.